

## Crepes and Pretty Rocks by enbyinthesun

**Category:** Stranger Things (TV 2016)

**Genre:** Aftercare, Alcohol, Angst, Awkward Romance, Billy Hargrove Needs a Hug, Biting, Bottom Billy Hargrove, Car Sex, Comfort, Coming Untouched, Eventual Smut, Fluff and Angst, Hand Jobs, Harringrove, Implied/Referenced Abuse, M/M, Post-Season/Series 03, Praise Kink, Soft Billy Hargrove, Steve Harrington Has Bad Parents, Top Steve Harrington

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**Characters:** Billy Hargrove, Billy Hargrove's Mother, Dustin Henderson, Keith (Stranger Things), Lucas Sinclair, Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Mike Wheeler, Original Female Character(s), Robin Buckley, Steve Harrington, Tommy Hagan

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**Summary:**

Billy Hargrove and Steve Harrington are roommates, and they may or may not have feelings for each other. Steve is slowly becoming Billy's world and he hasn't the slightest idea about how to handle it, let alone tell Steve how he feels. He should probably learn to love himself before he tries loving someone else, for starters.

**\*\*CURRENTLY RE-WRITING CHAPTER 4\*\***

# **1. Please Don't Be Mad When Tomorrow Comes**

## **Author's Note:**

I just want to preface this by saying that this isn't a premeditated novel, I wrote this spontaneously for fun and decided to share it with y'all.

Idk how long the finished work will be, but I wrote this and came up with the plot in my free time, and honestly aren't we all just here to pretend that Billy isn't dead? Thought so.

Anyways, I hope you enjoy this feel-good fic and that it works for all intended purposes to make you feel good while reading it! I sure felt good writing it

:)

## **Summary for the Chapter:**

Billy's a little frustrated and needs a good pat on the back to get his shit together. Maybe a few pats. And a hug couldn't hurt. As long as it comes from Steve, he'll take anything he can get.

## **Notes for the Chapter:**

Post s3 fic that I'm hoping will be a little longer than what I'm used to writing? I hate writing slow burn though, so there's not gonna be any of that shit 'cause I want them to just kiss already, probably more than you do. A bunch of my personal hc's will be incorporated in this work, and I hope y'all like them because I've spent too many hours just sitting on my ass thinking about these characters and picking them apart instead of doing hw.

He isn't really sure why he's out here if he's being completely honest. The sun is dipping below the treeline, the sky fading from baby blue

to a bright orange right at the divide, but Billy's eyes are trained elsewhere. Namely on his open palm sitting in his lap. His chest feels hollow and a tingly sensation prickles the back of his throat like bile, so he takes a drink.

It's not his first of the afternoon. In fact, he's pretty sure that Steve has been counting the times he puts the flask to his lips. Because Steve is attentive like that.

More like *annoying* .

When he peeks at the brunet out of the corner of his eye, walking down the hill with everything that Dustin loaded into his arms, he tsks. There's definitely an ear-pulling coming his way. Deep lines of frustration are settled between Steve's eyebrows and he's not even dignifying Billy with a *glance* as he rounds to the back of the Camaro.

The car shifts as they pile shit in the trunk, and Billy suppresses the urge to make a fuss about them potentially banging up his car. Because he's *nicer* now. Then Steve is sliding into the driver's seat.

"Guess I'll be driving back, huh?"

It isn't so much a question as it is a statement. Billy shrugs a shoulder and shifts in his seat, legs spread and knees bumping against the glove compartment.

"If you don't mind."

Max goes sailing past them screaming and *wheezing* between giggles as Lucas chases her with something nasty on the end of the stick in his hand. Billy tips the flask to his lips again. He's waiting for Steve to do something. To raise his voice to that stern tone only a father would ever use and rip the flask out of his hand. Dump its contents in the dirt. Maybe lecture Billy about how he shouldn't behave like this in front of the kids. In front of *anyone* .

Instead, there's a hand resting delicately on Billy's shoulder.

"You doin' alright?" Steve asks.

His voice is too gentle and hushed when he speaks. Too caring.

“Mhm.”

“Okay. Let me know if that changes.”

His hand lingers and Billy can feel his pulse pounding against the shells of his ears. When Steve first started touching Billy like this, it was a quick pat or a soft squeeze, something brief and brotherly. Now his thumb is swiping back and forth against the fabric of his shirt. Not leaving.

Billy manages a nod and reaches forward in a lazy grab for the handle of the glovebox, pulling the thing open and fishing for his spare pack of cigarettes among the napkins and other junk he keeps tucked away there. In the far back corner, he sees a roll of condoms. Then he's abruptly kicking the glovebox shut.

Steve doesn't release him as he starts to fumble with his lighter. He doesn't lean away from the touch, either.

“Need some help with that, butterfingers?”

“Fuck you.”

But Billy hands him the lighter anyway. Steve just chuckles and lights it without any hassle, and although Billy mourns the loss of his touch, he lets himself get swallowed in the pretty brown haze of Steve's eyes. The brunet steals a few puffs before he perches the cig between Billy's lips.

The new feeling that curls in the pit of his stomach is one he's coming to be familiar with; it settles in whenever Steve touches him. In passing, when he slugs his arm, even when their fingers brush while they do the dishes.

He's turning away and taking another drink after a moment of stillness. Steve's eyes are still trained on him, elbow leaning against the center console and invading his space. Which is nothing new. Nothing *bad* , per se.

“C'mon, let's go!” Dustin yells from somewhere behind the car.

Max and Lucas meander over from where they were chasing each

other around, hand-in-hand as always, and Mike appears out of nowhere. Before Billy has the chance to grumble and climb out of his seat, Steve is up and out of the car, tilting the seat forward and letting the kids file into the back seat.

The car jostles and Billy grips the door handle to ground himself as nausea overwhelms him, making his mouth water in waves of heat. Max slides in first, Mike climbing in after her, and Dustin groans.

“You got to do it on the way *here*,” he complains.

“And I’m about to do it on the way *back*,” Lucas retorts matter-of-factly.

Dustin shakes his head and reluctantly climbs into the back seat beside Mike. Lucas crawls over their laps shortly after and rests his head in Max’s. The sounds of giggling and kissing emanating from the back seat are ones that Billy tunes out, grateful when the car roars to life and somewhat drowns it out.

Billy cracks the window and dangles his cigarette out, watching the sun disappear completely below the treeline as the rolling hills sink away behind them, the car steadily moving toward the street below. His chest pulls tight, skin feeling as though it’s twisting and turning over his muscles. Taut. Uncomfortable. He stretches a hand out to turn the radio up. Some stupid rock station fills the car at a low hum as he takes another gulp from his flask.

“You sure you’re okay?” Steve prods gently.

His voice is still hushed, but there’s suddenly an absence of sound from the back seat, and Billy tilts his head to look at the brunet.

“Do I look that bad, Harrington?”

“No, you’re just...” Steve hesitates. “You’re just quiet, is all.”

“M just tired,” he excuses.

Billy smiles. Even if just a little. He’s never considered himself much of a talker. He just can never seem to shut his trap around Steve. Well, usually, anyway.

Earlier before he'd decided to get drunk, he was tussling with Steve in the field below the hill the kids were perched on. They grappled, laughed, and Billy didn't try as hard as he could have. Let Steve pin him on his back twice before they sat beside one another and looked out over the valley. Just riding on the high of Steve's touch, even if it wasn't necessarily gentle.

His stupid polo is covered in grass blood. Billy's positive that the seat of his own pants is stained green as well.

"What do you want me to talk about?" he asks lamely.

The question rolls off of his tongue more suavely than he intends and a heat creeps up Steve's neck as a result.

"Dunno. Anything you want, I guess."

"I had fun pushing you around earlier," Billy confesses with a chuckle. "Owe you a new fancy shirt now, but it was worth it."

Steve smiles. Huge and goofy. Billy stares for a long moment, probably mirroring the expression back at him.

"I think I have enough polos to get by, but the offer is nice."

There isn't really a time when they're together that Billy isn't studying some feature or another. Often looking for ways to get Steve to touch him. More than just a pat on the back or a gentle touch in passing. Because Billy can't get by on just that. Not anymore.

Steve would probably hug or even kiss him if he asked, being the physically affectionate person that he is, but Billy can never bring himself to ask.

"Whatcha thinkin' about over there?" Steve chuckles.

Billy faces forward to look through the windshield and bumps the ash off of his cigarette out the window. Maybe it's the booze. Maybe it's because despite the constricting pain in his chest, he'd been fairly at ease today. Whatever the reason, he's feeling more honest than usual, and his lips part without any hesitation.

“About how pretty you are.”

“Thought maybe I still had grass on my face or something.”

If not for the unmistakable redness blotching Steve’s complexion, Billy’s heart might have begun to sink to the pit of his stomach. Instead, he huffs a laugh to himself. There’s no threat of being turned down here. Because Billy isn’t asking anything significant. He isn’t asking anything at all.

At least that’s what his drunken mind tells him.

“What’re *you* thinkin’ about, pretty boy?” Billy lilts.

“Getting you home and taking that flask out of your hand. Maybe making sure you didn’t exert yourself too much today before I put you to bed.” Steve smiles and glances at Billy. “Did you overextend?”

The word *home* sits heavy in Billy’s chest. Maybe even sobers him up a little.

“No, why do you ask?”

He can’t help but grin when Steve snorts. Everything about him is so easy from his relaxed grip on the steering wheel to the sleepy slump of his posture as he drives Billy’s car. Drives Billy’s car and looks *cute* doing it.

“Because you’ve been rubbing your chest for, like, an hour now.”

Billy looks down and sure enough, his palm is flat against his sternum. He tsks and lets it fall to his side.

“I *didn’t* overextend,” he repeats.

“Yeah, and I guess you didn’t get drunk either. Was I too rough with you? You gotta tell me next time if I am, I don’t want you to get hurt.”

A short silence settles. Steve is a little tense now, even if only slightly, and Billy turns to face him in his seat. He pushes away the urge to say something like *I wish you’d been rougher* and spreads a soft smile

instead. The kind he would give Karen Wheeler when he would whisper naughty things in her ear for the thrill of it. The kind he would fail to recognize as his own expression in the mirror. Too soft.

"I'm still sitting here, right? Not out there dead and gone in the grass," Billy coos.

He raps his knuckles gently against Steve's bicep. The brunet exhales a sigh through his nose.

"That's not my point."

"Everyone thinks I'm so fragile *all* the time, Harrington. When I used to go to the fuckin' store I'd get chicks following me around trying to get my number. Now they duck their heads like I'm some make-a-wish kid or something, like if they flirt with me I'll be pushin' up daisies," Billy begins.

He eyes the flask in his lap as his fingers fiddle aimlessly with the sleeve of Steve's polo. Green streaks embedded in the fabric. Flask nearly empty. Steve remains quiet.

"I was rolling over earlier, letting you win even though I coulda had you pinned both times."

"Why?" Steve asks softly. "Why'd you let me win?"

Billy gulps. It's audible and his throat clicks as he glances out the window, pinching Steve's shirt between his fingers like he's afraid he might slip away if he doesn't.

"Wanted to see you on top of me," Billy admits lowly.

His thumb continues to graze over the wooly fabric. Not turning his eyes on Steve as he tilts his head back against the seat. The street lights flicker on one at a time. Billy wishes for a moment that he waited to put his heart on his sleeve.

Steve doesn't respond. The kids in the back seat are motionless. A new tightness coils in Billy's chest. He puts the cigarette out on the side of the car and reaches for his flask.

“Why’re you so... so *out of it* , then, if I didn’t hurt you?” Steve coos.

The compassion lacing his voice makes Billy’s heart hammer against his ribs. His throat goes dry as he finally looks at Steve. Turns out the brunet had been steadily stealing glances this whole time, brows pressing together in worry instead of anger.

“Dunno.”

“You sure?”

The flask hovers in front of his face as he drains the last of it and slouches in his seat. An abundance of thoughts swarm his head, thoughts of guilt and regret. Mostly about how he ruined a perfectly good afternoon with Steve and the kids by being his typical asshole self. His voice is hoarse when he speaks again.

“Am I bad?” Billy flattens his hand against Steve’s arm, mimicking his motion earlier by swiping his thumb back and forth against his shirt. “Sometimes I feel like I am because I do bad shit.”

“No, you aren’t bad,” Steve says softly.

Tears prick Billy’s eyes. His head hurts then, like his brain is suddenly too swollen to fit in his skull. Max and Lucas offer some quiet encouragement from the back seat. Lucas even pats a hand on Billy’s shoulder, but he doesn’t hear what’s said.

Part of him thinks that he doesn’t *deserve* to hear it. Because they’re always giving him the benefit of the doubt. Wrongfully so.

“Hey, what’s wrong?” Steve asks.

Billy realizes that he’s squeezing his arm, so he shifts and pulls away. Steve is quick to catch his wrist in a gentle, but firm grip. A sob slithers up Billy’s throat. Broken and pitiful.

“It hurts,” he admits.

“What hurts, Bill?”

Suddenly the words are plastered to the back of his tongue and refuse

to come out. His throat constricts and he's tilting his head back against the headrest again, using his free hand to tap his sternum with his index and middle fingers. Like a toddler who hasn't yet learned to verbally communicate through words and just points and babbles at things instead. That's how he feels, at least.

"Your chest hurts? Do you need me to pull over at a phone booth and call Dr. Owens?"

Billy shakes his head and bites his bottom lip to keep it from quivering. He's glad he's still feeling a buzz because he doesn't think he could tolerate this situation sober.

Crying? In front of *Steve* ? Hard pass.

He would be upset about showing weakness in front of the kids like this if they hadn't already watched him die. Literally. Steve's fingers lace between his and *squeeze* . The touch is enough to ground him a little. Enough to make his headache subside because his silent whimpers cease. For a moment anyway.

His free hand is rubbing at his chest again. The pads of his fingers brush over the twisted flesh of the scar there, bumpy and raised around the edges and still a blistering pink against his tan skin.

For a few long beats, the only thing filling the silence is the radio. The longer Steve holds his hand while he drives, the more Billy relaxes in his seat and thinks about how they're just like an old couple taking an evening cruise. He sighs and lets his eyes slip shut. Focussing solely on the sensation of Steve's thumb rubbing the back of his hand, and how much he wants to feel it every waking second of every day.

"M sorry," Billy blurts.

"What for?"

"Being a fuckin' mess."

Steve chuckles. Billy leans towards the sound, eyes still pinched shut.

"You're not a mess, you're just out of sorts right now. Totally not a

big deal.”

“It’s not?”

“Nah.”

The corners of Billy’s mouth quirk upward as he gives in and lets sleep wrap its claws around him. Things are quiet for a long time. He drifts in and out of consciousness, dozing off to the chorus of a song on the radio and stirring awake during the end of another.

He feels the car come to a stop a few times, jostling as kids clamber out of the back seat and when things return to being still, he feels Steve’s hand back in his and they’re driving again. The distinct sound of gravel crunching under the tires stirs him and the next thing he knows is Steve is standing in the door, leaning over to undo Billy’s seatbelt.

“C’mon big guy, let’s go inside,” Steve instructs.

He smiles. Big, goofy, and beautiful. Billy tries to comply. He inevitably winds up unable to stand, and when he thinks he’s tumbled to the ground, he finds his chin resting against Steve’s shoulder.

The dude is apparently a lot stronger than he thought.

Steve ducks under one of Billy’s arms and secures him at his side with an arm braced around his hip. They begin the slow trek up the porch steps, Billy’s feet practically *dragging* at Steve’s side and nearly making them both topple over twice.

“Here, think you can help me out a little?”

Billy finds his footing long enough for Steve to fish around in his pocket for the house key, still leaning heavily against him when he finally manages to unlock the door. It seems like they stand there forever until Billy’s being moved again and he plops down on the couch gracelessly. He grumbles a *what the fuck Harrington?* once he settles. Steve just chuckles at him.

Then he’s being guided upright. Being tucked under an arm that has

to be Steve's. Relishing in the heat that encompasses him even though he doesn't ask for it.

"What're you doing?" Billy jabs. As though Steve is doing something foolish or otherwise *reckless* and needs a stern talking to. But he's leaning against him anyway, pressing his face into the crook of Steve's neck and breathing in his scent.

Vanilla and something spicy, probably his deodorant.

"I'm cuddling you."

"Why?"

"Because you're upset."

"Am *not* ." He listens to Steve's laugh as it reverberates in his chest, so close. Too close. Before Billy can protest or move away, there are soft fingers brushing against his cheek, and his brows knit together. "Why's your hand wet?"

"You're still crying, Bill."

"Oh."

Steve wipes the tear streaks away and holds Billy closer. Shushes into his hair softly and rubs his arm. Billy swears he can feel the brush of lips against the part in his hair a few times as he sighs. His hand migrates to rest on his chest as it often does, heart beating rapidly against his palm.

It's strange, though, because he feels surprisingly numb right now. Another tear rolls down his cheek as Steve joins his hand over Billy's.

"M tired," Billy grumbles.

"You wanna go lie down?"

"Uh-huh."

The room seems to whirl around him as Steve shifts away from his side and stands up, holding his hands out for Billy to take. He grabs

on and squeezes as Steve hoists him up. Billy wavers on his feet, but he's quickly leveled out with strong hands braced on his shoulders. They walk to Billy's room at the end of the short hall just off the kitchen.

They stand in the dark doorway, Billy finding Steve's arm and gripping it. Only partly for support. Big brown eyes train on him from what he can see through the blur and he smiles dumbly.

"C'mon," Steve coos. "Sit down."

Billy obeys. He keeps his hand on Steve to assure himself that he's still there as he eases down on the mattress, watching the brunet kneel in front of him and take on the task of unlacing his boots.

"I'm not a little kid, asshole."

"By all means, undress yourself if you think you're up for it," Steve chuckles.

Billy scoffs and grabs the hem of his shirt, tugging it up over his head and flopping backwards in the process. He struggles to remove the garment entirely, face heating up when he hears Steve snickering at him, but eventually tosses the shirt to the floor with a huff. Once Billy's boots are off, Steve removes his socks and stands up. He looks good from this angle. From all angles, really, but Billy is absolutely starstruck by this one. Then his belt is being undone and he snatches Steve's wrists.

"Hey, *hey* , hands off the goods, darling," he blurts.

"Relax. You can't sleep comfortably in your jeans."

"Like hell I can't. I'd prefer if you didn't see my dick right now."

"We had basketball practice together in high school, remember? I've seen more than probably necessary. And besides, tighty-whities aren't anything I'm new to."

Steve's hands fumble with the belt buckle further and Billy tightens his grip. Not hard enough to leave a mark or to cause any pain, just enough to make Steve halt his movements. A warning, of sorts.

“No, you don’t get it,” Billy huffs. “I’m not wearing any.”

He studies Steve’s face for a moment, unable to keep from smiling when Steve tosses his head back and howls with laughter.

“Who fucking goes commando in *jeans* ?”

“Me, apparently.”

Steve’s hands leave his belt and settle against the mattress on either side of Billy’s hips. Just leaning there, smiling. Smiling down at Billy and suddenly he doesn’t want his pants to be removed for a different reason *entirely* .

“You’re a mystery, Billy Hargrove.” He looks on for a moment. Billy wonders if he savors their eye contact as much as he does. “I feel like we have more to talk about. Not so sure you’ll be willing to share with me tomorrow, though.”

Billy shrugs a shoulder. When Steve’s gaze travels elsewhere, he mourns the loss, but follows the line of his eyes and determines that they settle on the large starburst scar in the center of his chest. Although it’s healed, the skin still looks irritated. Still *feels* irritated. Dry and flaky as though he doesn’t slather lotion on the damn thing twice daily.

One of Steve’s hands leaves the bed and Billy’s muscles contract beneath the touch as Steve’s fingers sweep delicately against his skin, stopping just short of the puckered edges of the scarred flesh. So careful, so soft that Billy doesn’t even think to smack his hand away. The look in Steve’s eyes is nothing short of adoration. Complete and full.

“Did you mean the stuff you said earlier or are you just drunk?” Steve whispers.

“Both.”

Billy shifts under his touch, body relaxing as Steve’s palm flattens over the scar. Steve nods.

“Are you hurting, y’know, right now?”

“No,” Billy breathes.

“Good.”

His thumb passes softly over the skin, probably hot under his hand from the blush that quickly spreads over Billy’s entire body. Steve watches him diligently as his hand smooths down to Billy’s side to inspect another scar tangled in his flesh. Then he leans closer. Breath cold against Billy’s steaming skin. He swears that Steve’s mouth ghosts against him, but he has yet to make contact.

“I think you’re pretty too, y’know,” Steve admires.

Without thinking, Billy reaches up and cups the side of Steve’s neck.

“Why?”

“What do you mean why?”

“I don’t scrunch my nose when I laugh or have cute freckles or fancy hair. I blow snot rockets in the shower and get drunk in broad daylight like an asshole, I’m *not* pretty.”

“Even as sniveling drunk as you are right now, and no matter how hard you’ll smack me tomorrow for saying this, I think you’re beautiful.”

Before Billy has the chance to protest, Steve ducks his chin and his lips meet the scar, actively ripping all of the air from Billy’s lungs in the process. He pushes a hand through Steve’s thick hair and bites back on the moan that threatens to break loose from his throat.

He didn’t ask for this. And here Steve is, doing it anyway, like he’s able to read Billy’s mind. The kisses grow deeper and last longer with each one he administers, Steve completely flush against Billy with his hands running up and down Billy’s sides, mouthing at and worshipping the scar like he’s been dying to put his lips to it for his whole life.

If Billy wasn’t horny before, he is now.

Toying with Steve’s hair and guiding his movements proves to be

enough to make him arch his back up into it. But the kisses never trail elsewhere. Billy never feels Steve's tongue like he desperately wants to. Never gets to taste him in return.

"You're gorgeous, Bill," Steve reassures. He leans up, leaving Billy panting softly beneath him. "I want you to be happy here, and not have to rely on drinking to feel that way."

Billy tucks some of Steve's hair behind his ear, searching for any hint of a lie on his face. He smiles when he finds none.

"Yeah?" he croaks.

His eyes burn with fresh tears and Steve is quickly cooing softly into his ear, begging him to stop crying. Billy doesn't though. He whines softly, the sounds slipping free without much interference. Steve stays by his side and lies on the bed next to him.

"I don't want you to just live here, I want you to see it as your home," Steve croons. "Here with me."

Billy swallows and leans into Steve's chest when he coaxes him closer. Probably further dirtying his shirt by smearing snot all over it. His fists find purchase, scrunching up the back of the ruined polo as he buries his face in Steve's chest and *sobs* .

There have been plenty of times in his life where he could do nothing but cry. When his mom left, for instance. When Neil would be in a particularly bad mood and decide he needed to take his anger out somehow Usually in Billy's room. And when Billy got so mad that the veins in his neck bulged, fists clenched so hard at his sides that his knuckles turned white.

But those were all silent cries. A little tear or maybe even a few before he composed himself or otherwise slept the feeling off.

Right now, his throat is going hoarse from the strangled, broken cries he attempts to muffle into Steve's shirt. Steve Harrington, the guy he once taunted and pushed around, is cradling him in his arms like a lover in desperate need of consoling.

"Hey, shh, it's alright," Steve whispers. He strokes Billy's hair and

sets his chin atop his head. "It's gonna be alright."

Billy snuffles. Tries to compose himself. Fails *miserably* , but there's a moment where he keeps the tears at bay before the outpour persists. Eventually, he goes still. Arms relaxing around Steve and fingers no longer tangled in his shirt with an unforgiving grip. Steve steadily rubs his back and Billy heaves a sigh.

Keeping his eyes open is becoming more of a difficult task now.

Then he's lulling to sleep in Steve's arms and it feels like the most normal thing ever when does, mind completely at ease as his breath evens out and his hold goes limp.

*Too easily* , he thinks.

### **Notes for the Chapter:**

Comments are kudos are always appreciated!

EDIT: y'all I'm sorry abt taking so long, I'm struggling pretty hard this semester if I'm being honest and I don't have a whole lot of spare time on my hands. I am def gonna keep writing this fic eventually, I just can't say when exactly that is rn, so sorry in advance!

## 2. It's A Date

### Summary for the Chapter:

It's the following day, and Billy isn't so sure he wants to risk an awkward encounter with Steve, mostly due to the fact he doesn't recall much from last night. Little does he know, Steve is a bit nervous about something as well.

### Notes for the Chapter:

This chapter is a bit dialogue-heavy jsyk. I don't have anyone to edit my stuff so if there are mistakes, simply do not look at them.

There are days in Hawkins where it's simply too hot to *think* about going outside. Days where even a light breeze can't coax the heat out of your skin.

Billy curses under his breath, knees digging into the dirt while grime clings to the beads of moisture on his forehead. His t-shirt is sticking to his damp skin and more dirt smears on his face when he reaches up to wipe the existing filth off.

Today is one of those dreadful days.

"Would you like a glass of iced tea, William?"

He lifts his head and squints at Mrs. Adley. She's standing on her porch with hands on her waist, a little smile quirking her lips, and her bifocals slipping too far down her hooked nose.

"Sure," he manages.

The words he wants to spit at her die on the back of his tongue. Something along the lines of *I've told you it's Billy a hundred times now, why the hell is that so hard to remember?*

But they're better off kept inside; Mrs. Adley is a nice lady. She pays Billy a little extra for the work he does in her yard and sometimes

even bakes cookies and brings them across the street. She's also one of the only women in town who doesn't shamelessly flirt with Billy.

Mostly because she's more interested in his tall, freckled roommate.

Billy just tsks to himself and goes about pulling weeds. The image of Mrs. Adley flirting with Steve makes a deep sense of unease settle into his bones, though not as much as when he drops by the video store on occasion and sees younger women do the same. Asking him stupid questions over the counter about movies they aren't the *least* bit interested in. Steve smiling coyly and slipping innuendos into his responses.

He always excuses it as a means to keep clientele, but Billy knows better. Knows that Steve thrives on the attention.

"William?" Mrs. Adley prods gently.

Billy looks up, sees her hovering over him again with a gentle smile, and he realizes that he'd been ripping weeds aggressively enough from the ground that bits of dirt scattered all over her beige stockings.

"It's Billy," he corrects.

"Right. *Billy* ." She chuckles and holds out the promised glass of tea. He knows the stuff is bitter before he even takes a drink, but the glass is sweating and the ice is clinking around audibly, so he takes it and puts it to his lips anyway. "Is everything alright, Billy?"

After he takes a generous gulp, he sighs and rocks back on his knees, catching sight of the BMW pulling up to the curb across the street. Mrs. Adley's eyes follow his line of sight and her smile widens.

"Yeah," Billy sighs. "Sorry about the mess, Cheryl, you can take however much your stockings are worth out of my pay."

"Nonsense. I'd have *more* ruined clothes if you weren't so nice as to tend to my garden."

Billy nods, though he barely catches what she says after that. Something about how Steve looks *dandy* today or whatever. It's at

least something they agree on. Steve slips out of his car and jogs inside hurriedly, not sparing either of them a glance, and Billy tears his eyes away once the front door swings shut.

There's a tightness in his stomach then. He wants to run across the street and ask Steve how his day is going so far. Make him scrunch his nose and giggle because Billy is caked in dirt and sweat, but every muscle in his body is *screaming* at him to duck his head and hide before Steve comes back outside. He stays put and defies both lines of thought. Hands Mrs. Adley the glass when he drains the rest of it and mutters a *thanks* before getting back to work.

His pulse is still thundering in his head from last night. Any nausea he felt upon waking up has passed by now, though his stomach still churns uncomfortably when he twists or stands up too fast.

When Billy thinks of how he wound up tucked into his bed last night, nothing really comes to mind, other than the knowledge that it was Steve's doing. No one else would've bothered with him.

That much, he's sure of.

The door swings open across the street. Billy wills himself not to look. Tells himself it'll be bad if he does. Then there are footsteps approaching and he inwardly curses himself for not hiding or, hell, sprinting as fast as he can down the street because anything would be better than whatever awkward conversation is about to rear its head.

"Hey, you're alive," Steve muses. He kicks the toe of his sneaker against the curb and when Billy lifts his eyes, he finds a smirk on the brunet's lips. "You were still knocked out when I got up for work. Thought maybe you were done for."

"Mm, not the first time I've heard *that* before."

Somewhere on the porch, Mrs. Adley shifts in her rocking chair, probably eyeing Steve over her newspaper more conspicuously than she realizes. Billy continues to pluck weeds and toss them into the bag at his side. Steve rubs the back of his neck.

"How're you doing today?" he asks.

The little lilt to his voice makes Billy's skin steam. Burning hotter than the sun that's beating down on his back.

"You ask that like you expect me to say that I'm doing shitty."

"You don't *look* like you're doing shitty, but I'd be a bad roommate if I didn't ask anyway."

"Right," Billy huffs. "I'm doin' fine."

"Just fine?"

Steve taps the curb with his shoe again and shuffles on his feet, bits of gravel scraping against the pavement beneath them. A pang of guilt hits Billy's chest. Soaking in deep. So he sighs and pushes himself up off the ground and wipes his hands on the legs of his jeans, glances Steve with some eye contact, and makes note of how he stops shifting restlessly almost immediately.

"A bit hungover, yeah, but fine."

"Glad to hear it," Steve chuckles.

His cheeks are dusted a pretty pink. It highlights the faint sprinkle of freckles across the bridge of his nose, and if Billy wasn't already feeling groggy this afternoon, it might've spawned a flurry of butterflies in his stomach. Steve smiles and waves a hand at Mrs. Adley before he steps onto her lawn.

"Why aren't you at work?" Billy asks.

"Oh, uh, Keith was nagging me about a movie I have overdue. I just came by to grab it."

Steve raises the tape in his hand for emphasis. It doesn't surprise Billy that it's *Jaws* because he's heard that stupid *we need a bigger boat* line probably a dozen times this month. He nods and manages to conjure up some semblance of a smile as he squints his eyes.

"So you're headed back, then?"

"Yeah," Steve says softly. His eyes cast downward for a moment,

lingering on his shoes or maybe Billy's before he looks back up warily. "Are we... good?"

"Is there a reason we shouldn't be?"

"I dunno. Depends."

"On?"

Billy watches with amusement as Steve shifts back and forth. Very transparently nervous. Billy just aches to figure it all out. To get to the bottom of why his eyes burn and why his voice is so hoarse. Why he feels like he should be running for the hills right now.

"What you remember, I guess."

There's a beat of silence. Billy huffs a laugh, glances briefly back at Mrs. Adley over his shoulder, and gestures vaguely between himself and Steve.

"Do I need to ask if things got weird last night?" he whispers.

"Things didn't get weird in a *bad* way if that's what you mean."

Billy nods. He opens his mouth and snaps it shut immediately after. Only opening it again after he leans closer and lowers his voice further.

"Did we...?"

"I'm a *gentleman* ," Steve says like he's offended. When Billy does little more than quirk an eyebrow at him, he scoffs and ducks his head. "No. No, we didn't."

Billy spreads a sly grin. Steve doesn't seem repulsed by the question, just a little flustered, maybe irritated. Not disgusted. That's all it takes for Billy's insides to turn to molten lava.

"Hmm, did you at least have fun toting me around like a rag doll?" he teases.

Steve's eyes snap to his and he huffs a laugh. The sound is snide and

doesn't match the way his eyes crinkle at the corners, but Billy pretends to put up a guard anyway. Squares his shoulders a little and narrows his eyes for good measure.

"Oh, so you *do* remember some parts?"

"Bits and pieces."

A light gust of wind tosses Steve's hair out of his face, screwing it up a bit. It's still cute as all sin, so much so that Billy has to try *extra* hard to refrain from reaching out and fixing it. From running his hand through those thick locks and twirling them around his fingers.

"What do you remember?"

"I know I got a little difficult after the kids packed up their radio," Billy offers.

Steve chuckles, light and bubbly, nose scrunching and all. Every urge to hide or otherwise run away slips free of Billy's mind in that instant. If gravity would allow it, he'd be levitating right about now.

"You weren't too bad."

"But I was still bad?"

"Psh," Steve chuckles on an exhale and sweeps a hand through his hair. "You're *never* bad," he coos. There's a moment where it looks like he might speak again, so Billy keeps his lips together, raising his eyebrows when Steve locks eyes with him. "Do you... Do you wanna go on a walk? After you're done here?"

"Won't Kieth be pissed if you don't go back to work?"

"Nah, he can't fire me. I'm the only one who rewinds the tapes."

Billy chuckles and glances down at the rest of the weeds he has to pull. Thinks for a second about how miserable his body feels right now. How much he desperately wants to go across the street, shower, and crash on the couch.

"Sure," he says.

\* \* \*

The steady crunch of pine needles beneath his boots is what he attempts to focus on. It's incredibly hard when Steve's shoulder is brushing against his. He doesn't think they've ever walked this close before, and truthfully, it makes him feel fuzzy all over. Like they're walking hand-in-hand.

It's a silly thought to have. At least for Billy, it is. He's always been the kind of guy to flirt until he gets what he wants, and what he wants is always so clearly spelled out in his head because all he *ever* wants is sex.

Or, it used to be, anyway.

He's never fantasized about holding hands with a girl. Never dreamt of teaching a girl how to surf, or of taking a girl to visit his mother's grave back in California. He's definitely never thought about cooking dinner for a girl, either. Never really thinks about cooking to begin with.

Something tells him he *knows* the reason behind it all, but he pushes it down, so far down, that his mind blanks for a moment.

"I always liked walking the tracks when I was a kid," Steve says.

Billy's head gives a tug upward and he glances over at Steve before he nods. They'd climbed in his car as soon as Billy was done weeding, right after Mrs. Adley slapped a wad of cash in his hand, and drove out to god knows where. Some *hick* hang-out spot Steve apparently knows like the back of his hand.

If Billy didn't know better, he might think Steve brought him out here to kill him.

"Yeah?"

"Mhm, it's always so nice out here, y'know?"

Boards pass beneath Billy's boots and his lips quirk into a smile when he imagines little Steve jumping from one to the next. Hair still as unruly and stupid as ever. Hoping to feel the rumble of a train and get to watch it race by, wondering where it goes as it passes.

"It's calm," Billy says and earns Steve's gaze for a moment.

There's still pain residing in his temples, but he's a lot more at ease now that he isn't directly under the sun. Everything is tranquil and easy when he's with Steve. He feels a little stupid for wanting to avoid him earlier.

Especially since he can't put a finger on why he felt that way in the first place.

"Every time I'm in the woods I wanna grab a stick or a rock or something and take it home with me. I used to come home with my pockets full pretty much every day after school," Steve confesses.

When Billy sneaks another glance, he sees the fond smile on Steve's face. Sees his hair shift effortlessly around as they walk.

"Sounds like something you'd do," Billy chuckles. He kicks a stone that's on the tracks and whistles when it chips the bark off a tree a ways away. "Why'd you stop?"

"I can't exactly have a room full of rocks and sticks n' shit."

"I think it'd mesh well with your velvet duvet and satin curtains. Kinda like a gremlin meets a rich boy and they share a bedroom sort of thing, y'know?"

Steve snorts and knocks their shoulders together.

"I *do* live with a gremlin. He sleeps late and eats all my food and gets pissy when I tell him to clean his bedroom."

"How am *I* the gremlin, exactly?"

"Easy. You snarl, you break things, and you stalk around on all fours."

Billy cackles at the top of his lungs and Steve smirks at him goofily like he always does. His pretty pink lips stretch over sharp white teeth. Perfect, like they'd been straightened out by braces once upon a time. Billy pictures little Steve walking the train tracks with headgear and his smile widens.

"Am I at least a cute gremlin?"

"You're cute when you aren't arguing with me about where to put the silverware. I'm telling you, the long forks and the short forks go in *different* places."

Another gentle breeze sweeps Steve's hair around and Billy can't help but stare. It's a wonder how the dude isn't constantly beating the ladies off of him with a stick.

Billy knows why.

Steve is a dork with a knack for making awkward situations constantly by talking about whatever the *hell* is on his mind. People don't usually take to that. They have the whole *he was hot until he opened his mouth* state of mind.

But Billy is just the opposite.

"Forks are forks, dude," he offers.

"Those are fighting words."

"Yeah? Gonna take another crack at kicking my ass, Harrington?"

Steve's hand raises and shoves Billy on the shoulder lightly. Before either of them really have a grasp on what's happening, Billy has Steve in a headlock and they've completely stopped in their tracks. They grunt and Steve giggles helplessly when Billy pokes at his side. He manages to wring a snort out of the brunet in the process.

Then Billy's easing his grip a bit when Steve runs out of breath, already anticipating him worming out of the hold and making another move. Said move winds up being Steve turning around, ducking down, grabbing Billy around the waist, and hoisting him up over his shoulder like a damsel. He *screams* as he's lifted off the

ground and Steve just laughs at him and continues walking. Like he's the lightest thing in the world.

"Harrington, what the *fuck* ?"

"You looked tired so I'm doing you a favor."

Steve adjusts him like he's nothing more than cargo, his forearm secured over the backs of Billy's thighs. He feels like a little kid again. Like how when his mom would give him piggy back rides on the beach even though he was starting to get too big for her to carry. That was probably the last time he was picked up, now that he thinks about it.

"Put me down."

"Why should I?"

"Because I wanna be let *down* , asshole."

"You aren't exactly *struggling* , your highness."

Just as Billy begins to wriggle, Steve's free hand comes up and spansks him, which has Billy stilling over his shoulder. He knows that his face is burning a dark red as he wonders if that really happened. If *this* is really *happening* .

Steve giggles and stops after a moment. Billy's boots hit the dirt with a thud and, for whatever reason, Steve keeps on casually as if he hadn't *done* anything. It makes Billy wonder for a second if maybe he's going insane. Then he's jogging to catch up with Steve and standing closer than before.

"Do I really look that tired?" Billy asks.

"You always look tired." Their knuckles brush at their sides and Billy's heart starts a steady kick against his ribs. "Not in a bad way, just like you could use a good nap or a few extra hours of rest, y'know?"

It's easier to nod than attempt to formulate words. So Billy does just that. Their hands touch again and all he can think about is

intertwining his fingers with Steve's. He wonders if Steve's palms are as callused as his or if they're soft, moisturized, and velvety to the touch because of all the products he uses daily.

Somehow, he already knows that it's the ladder of the two.

Steve dips down and snatches a stick off the tracks and admires it. Runs over the notches in the wood with the pads of his fingers and waves it around like a bat in his grip.

"See, isn't this a pretty stick?"

Billy wants to say something like *not as pretty as you* but he pinches his lips together instead. Continues walking as though he doesn't want to push Steve up against a tree and kiss him raw.

"Did you... bring me out here to tell me something?" he asks.

His voice comes out sounding meek and he inwardly slaps himself. Wills himself to man up and use his big boy voice. But Steve keeps a soft smile on his face as he chucks the stick at the treeline, connecting with a large rock and sending a loud *thunk* echoing through the trees.

"Wanted to get away from Cheryl. She was giving me sex eyes."

"Gross."

Steve hums a laugh and slips his hands in the front pockets of his jeans. His polo is ironed, probably freshly pressed from that morning, and Billy has the deepest urge to ruin it like he did the other one. To wrestle with Steve and let him win as many times over that he so desires.

"Actually, I uh... I was worried about you. After last night, I mean," he admits. One of his hands comes up to rub the back of his neck, fingers pinching at the hair at his nape before he lets it fall back to his side. "I didn't come home just for the tape, truth be told."

"Think I'm *that* fragile, huh?" Billy teases.

Steve's smile fades. Even if only for a moment.

"I think you're anything *but* fragile. You just..."

"I just...?" Billy prods.

There's a chuckle between them. Soft and quiet, more to fill the silence and less because something is funny. This is the most serious he's seen Steve in a while, actually. The brunet shakes his head dismissively and his eyes cast downward again. Following the slow pass of boards beneath their shoes. The gentle crunch of pine needles and twigs as they trek on.

For a while, that's all there is. Silence above the sounds of the woods happening around them. The occasional bird chirping and the rustling of branches when a gust of wind blows by.

"I'm sorry," Billy blurts.

Steve looks at him, face unreadable, and then looks straight ahead. Truth be told, he's not really sure what he's sorry for. Everything, really. Too much to keep track of. Even the stuff he doesn't quite remember.

Like last night.

So he isn't really prepared when Steve asks, "For what?"

"I feel like I ruin things a lot."

"You don't *ruin* things, Bill, you just don't know how to let yourself enjoy them."

Their shoulders knock together and Billy smiles.

"You know something, Stevie?"

"Hmm?"

"You always know what to say. It kinda pisses me off sometimes because I envy that about you. Envy *you*, really."

Steve scoffs. It's not a mean sound, but more of a disbelieving one.

“You don’t envy me, I promise you that.”

“What’s not to envy about you?”

Then they’re stopping. Billy turns to Steve, who wedges his sneaker against one of the boards in the tracks, and lets his gaze train anywhere but at Billy’s eyes.

“A lot, actually.”

“Enlighten me.”

Billy crosses his arms. Steve sighs. The air between them isn’t *tense* , but it isn’t as light as it was a minute ago. Like Billy is daring him to say something and he’s debating on whether or not to accept.

“I dunno, you make it sound like I have a silver tongue or something, but I’m just... I’m just Steve.”

“ *Just* Steve?”

“Yeah. Even the name is fuckin’ bogus, dude. It’s like my parents picked it with the intention of me turning out lame.”

“Okay, you’re not *bugus* , first of all,” Billy begins. He steps closer so he’s standing on the board that Steve is nudging. The brunet’s eyes rise to meet his, looking at him through his lashes. “The name suits you. Really spells out *pretty boy* in a way that nothing else could.”

He taps the toe of his boot against Steve’s sneaker. They hold eye contact for a long moment until Steve looks away and his cheeks flush. All cute, like he’s embarrassed. Billy wants to tilt his chin up and press a kiss to his parted lips. Then to his cheek, his neck, and—

“See? You know what to say,” Steve chuckles.

His hand pats softly against Billy’s shoulder and the blond exhales a breath of air he didn’t realize he was holding in.

“Yeah.”

Steve shuffles their shoes together for a moment before he spreads a

smile and his shoulders droop.

“I overheard some girls at work earlier talking about Tina throwing a party this weekend. Wanna crash it with me?” Steve asks.

His figure is framed by the dark trunks of the trees looming overhead. Rays of light cascade down between the branches and make him look nothing short of angelic. Radiant. *Beautiful* , as always.

“Sure.”

“Hm, so it’s a date, then?”

Then Steve is turning and walking along the tracks again. Leaving Billy frozen to the spot, palms sweating as he racks his mind to make sure he just heard what he thinks he did. He’s quick to rejoin Steve at his side.

Both of them trek on with goofy grins plastered to their faces.

Billy tells himself that Steve didn’t mean it *that* way. That maybe he’s just being charitable because he pities Billy like everyone else in this god-forsaken town. Even so, he’s already thinking of what to wear to Tina’s party. Something that’ll make everybody drool when he struts through the front door. Everybody including one Steve Harrington.

“It’s a date,” he adds softly.

### **Notes for the Chapter:**

I always appreciate comments and kudos! Hopefully, the next chapter is gonna be a bit spicier, if you know what I mean ;)

### 3. Sweeter Than Sugar

#### Summary for the Chapter:

Billy acts a little selfishly at Tina's party. Steve rewards him with a burger and fries.

#### Notes for the Chapter:

I like to think that Billy can be a little goofy too sometimes, y'know?

Also, does anyone remember that scene from the 2017 Power Rangers where Jason (played by Dacre Montgomery, who also plays Billy) bitch-slaps the bully? I used that as inspiration for a scene later on in this chapter.

Hope it's not too terrible!

“Been a while since we’ve seen you, Hargrove. How long’s it been?”

Billy winces at the stench of beer on Tommy’s breath and leans away. The music is roaring above all of the conversations and yet, somehow, Tommy is louder still. It’s barely nine o’clock and the guy is already wavering on his feet and slurring.

Kinda reminds Billy of himself, actually.

“I saw you at the hardware store this Tuesday, Hagan,” Billy sneers.

He swirls the punch around in his plastic cup, no doubt spiked with tequila or something or rather, and tenses when Tommy slings an arm around his shoulder. Other than this, the past week has been... Well, it’s been one of the better weeks Billy’s had in a while if he’s being honest.

Mowing Mrs. Adley’s lawn didn’t seem like such a chore, neither did trimming Ms. Knapton’s hedges or refilling her bird feeders. All he could think about was coming to this party with Steve. Hell, the dude’s name was running on repeat in his head the whole week like a broken record.

Now that he's actually here, of course, all he can think about is leaving. Every now and again he'll glance at the front door when it opens. Just waiting for Steve to stroll through.

Maybe get a handle on his ex-best friend.

"Yeah, but how long's it been since you *partied* , man?" Tommy drones.

Billy shrugs him off and fixes him with a stern look that would surely have him turning tail if he were sober. But he *isn't* . So he's clutching at Billy's shirt again in a matter of seconds and leaning over to whisper in his ear. No words come out. Then Tommy giggles and tilts his face against Billy's shoulder.

To think he once thought that *Steve* was annoying. Turns out he had the wrong brunet.

"C'mon man, get off me," Billy insists. He shimmies an arm between them and pushes Tommy away, flattening out the wrinkles in his shirt after with his brows knitting together. "Maybe lay off the Party Fuel?"

Tommy's face goes blank and his eyes gloss over. For a moment it looks like he might cry, but then he snickers and knocks back the rest of his beer. Billy seriously considers punching him in the gut when he steps closer again. Rather than saying anything else, he just shoulder-checks Billy as he slips back into the crowd.

*This is off to a miraculous start* , Billy thinks.

He glances at the front door again when it opens but is quick to turn away when a group of girls stumbles in. Heels clicking loudly against the tile. Skirts riding up their thighs because they're simply *too* short. Some time ago, he'd be all over that mess. Trying to see how many of them he could make out with at once.

Now he's pondering just how *late* Steve meant when he said he'd be showing up later. Maybe Billy should've tuned in more when he was babbling over the phone about having to run errands after work. Or something to that effect. Billy's head was just too full of hot air to

listen, having previously dug through his closet for the perfect tight pair of skinny jeans and contemplating whether or not he'd unbutton his shirt down to his navel like he used to.

Long story short, he has no idea when Steve's coming.

He sighs as he settles into the couch and offers a polite smile when the girls next to him ask about his scar. What were they, the eighth billion people to inquire this evening? Just to spice things up, he's been telling a different story each time.

A tree branch impaled him when he was trying to save a kitten. His little sister has a talent for operating blow torches. A monster from another dimension mind-controlled him and then tried to murder him when he defied its will. He dumped hot soup on himself at the diner.

It's hard to keep track of what he's said exactly, but when he spots people talking lowly and pointing at him, he just nods and raises his drink like a good sport.

As the night drags on and he gets a few numbers scratched on napkins from various girls, he sighs. He tries not to get drunk. Truthfully, he does, but everything is just so *boring* that he finds himself refilling his cup at the keg every so often. Trying not to bump into Tommy when he does so.

One of the instances he's in the kitchen, he hears the door open. For whatever reason, he doesn't bother looking, but then he hears Tommy's voice ring out again.

"King Steve!" he roars.

There's a collective cheer from his *subjects*, Billy supposes. He turns and sees Steve standing there, barely having crossed through the threshold, Tommy hanging off of him like a baby monkey. He murmurs something to Steve and points. They both lock eyes with Billy and Tommy smirks slyly like an evil side-kick.

The look falls from his face when Steve pats him on the back and leaves his side.

As Steve saunters over to where Billy's leaning against the counter,

he drinks in the sight of him from head to toe, unable to keep from grinning. Apparently, Billy isn't the only one who decided to dress up for the occasion.

Steve's wearing jeans and a white t-shirt under a *very* colorful windbreaker that Billy's definitely seen in his closet before. Very on-brand for him. Billy thinks that it would look stupid on anyone else, but that's half the charm. It doesn't dawn on him at first that other people are watching too, and it hits him; no one sees what he sees. People turn their heads and smirk like there's about to be a brawl or something.

It makes sense when Billy thinks about it. No one knows that anything's different from how it was in high school because the Billy standing in the kitchen *looks* like the old him, the one that would try to beat Steve Harrington at every foreseeable pissing contest in sight just for bragging rights. To say that he bested The King of Hawkins High. Dangly earring and all.

When Steve finally reaches him, he quirks an eyebrow and pinches at the corner of Steve's windbreaker. A grin spreads on his face when Steve shrugs and looks away.

"It looked good when I put it on, okay? I'm not responsible for how it turns out after I'm out the door."

"It's certainly a choice, I'll give you that," Billy chuckles.

He plucks a plastic cup from the counter and holds it under the keg's spout before passing it to Steve. Like a breaking of bread. Mostly because Billy doesn't like the way people are looking at them right now. Looking at Steve like they think it'd be funny to see Billy take him out back and break his jaw.

"You, uh..." Steve trails off. He keeps his voice lower than the music, only parting his lips to speak again when a handful of gazes leave them "You clean up nice."

"Thanks. You look cute too, dork," Billy murmurs.

Steve's face tinges red as he takes a drink and Billy is absolutely *dying*

to kiss him. Well, he always is, but it's so much worse right now because he wants to do it even though there are people watching. The idea of having witnesses thrills him. Just a little.

So Billy does the only *logical* thing and calls out at the top of his lungs, "Who's up for Spin the Bottle?"

The response he receives is nothing short of a wild cheer. Like he's some saint who just solved world hunger. Then he's tossing back the rest of his punch and gesturing for Steve to follow him into the next room. Tommy looks amused when he sits across from Billy in the circle and produces an empty bottle.

Some of the girls who were hitting on Billy earlier in the evening sit down next to him. It seems like practically every pretty girl here gathers around and every guy wanting to get lucky does the same. All Billy cares about is Steve sitting halfway around the circle. Looking cute down on his knees.

Billy spins first and kisses some redhead who's more than eager to slip her tongue down his throat. Tasting like spearmint and booze and trying to lick every surface she can find purchase on. She's still looking at him through half-lidded eyes when she spins the bottle and kisses another girl from across the way. The crowd *roars* and Billy's heart flutters because he catches Steve's eye. His face is slack with sudden realization and he toys absently with the zipper on his windbreaker.

The game commences.

There are a few times the bottle lands on Steve and apparently, Billy isn't the only fan of his ridiculously flashy outfit. The ladies are dying to kiss him, it seems, and Billy wishes that Steve had literally brought a bat to beat them away with.

He would be lying if he said he wouldn't like to see that.

As he watches Steve, he's surprised that he doesn't feel his blood run hot like when he gets flirted with. Billy watches the way his jaw moves when he kisses, slow and deliberate, and the way he cranes his neck and lets his hand find purchase on the girl's thigh. Gently toying

with the end of her skirt or the seam of her pants.

He never closes his eyes all the way. Keeps them cracked just a little. Billy swears it's because he's looking at him, and if he weren't sitting down, he thinks his knees might go weak from it.

Steve spins and Billy nearly spontaneously combusts when the neck of the bottle points at him. They lock eyes for a moment and Tommy's voice is suddenly ringing out through the crowd.

"Uh-oh, party foul! Re-spin!"

He reaches for the bottle, only for his wrist to be snagged in Billy's grip. He stares at Tommy with steely eyes before he turns back to Steve.

"Only chicken shits spin twice," he growls, clicking his tongue. "Right, Harrington?"

He releases Tommy and crawls over to Steve, smirks when he nods meekly and takes a fistful of his shirt. Billy tunes the excited screams out when he presses his lips to Steve's and watches as his eyes slip shut. It's easy to sink into him, tilting his head to the side when Steve cranes his neck forward for more. This kiss isn't like the others. It's softer, no tongue.

Just a gentle brush of lips. Something he's been dying to do since Tina's last party he attended three years ago.

For a few seconds, Billy thinks he's in heaven, but he's grounded when Steve smooths his hand over his shoulder and his brain screams that it's too much, so he shoves Steve away roughly and smirks deviously.

"Guess all of the rumors were true; King Steve's one hell of a kisser," he huffs.

Then he and Steve are being patted on the back. Like what they just did was *daring* and worthy of praise. Not because it's acceptable, but because it's funny to watch. They both understand that much. Steve nods, his face completely flushed all the way down his neck, and he dismisses himself with the faintest smile from the circle.

Tommy calls after him aimlessly, asking if he's bitching out or if he's due to return. Steve pays him no mind and slips into the bathroom. Billy watches. Waits. Kisses a couple more girls with less interest than before and ignoring the heart eyes they give him after.

He excuses himself under the guise of needing another drink from the kitchen and slips into the bathroom as soon as it's clear to. Steve is leaning back against the sink when he shuts the door and locks it behind him.

"That was—"

Billy swallows his words with another kiss. It lasts longer, tastes sweeter, and this time Steve's arms reach around Billy's neck. They're gentler when they part. Steve is out of breath but he's smiling.

"Sorry," Billy breathes. He moves closer and puts his hands on the sink, trapping Steve in. "Probably stretched your collar when I grabbed you."

He dips his head down and mouths at Steve's jaw. Fingers push through the hair at his nape and Billy hums against his skin.

"It's fine. You have a thing for ruining my clothes, apparently."

The music from the living room pours through the walls, somewhat muted by the time it reaches their ears, but Billy is listening more to the way Steve huffs quietly into his ear.

Turns out his neck is sensitive. Billy lets his tongue slide out against his Adam's apple and Steve whines breathlessly, tugging at Billy's hair as they lean father back against the sink. Steve's head almost touches the mirror and Billy can't help but smile against him because it's finally happening. He can't recall how many times he's cum with this image in his mind. With Steve's name on his lips.

He grinds forward and Steve's breath hitches in his throat.

Billy can *feel* him through his jeans. Half hard and filling out more by the second.

"Hey," Steve whispers. "Before you get any further, how much have

you had to drink?”

“A lot.”

“What’s a lot for you?”

“Let’s just say I can barely think straight right now. *Literally* .”

Steve chuckles but then he’s bracing his hands on Billy’s shoulders and gently pushing him back. Billy just stands and stares, horribly confused as Steve toys with his earring.

“Let me take you out to dinner,” Steve coos.

His voice is deep and suave and Billy tilts their foreheads together.

“Right. *Gentleman* .”

“Mhm, you’re drunk and as much as I’d love to christen this sink right now...” Steve cups Billy’s cheek in one hand and their gazes meet. “I’d prefer if you remember the details.”

“You’re not even a *little* drunk?”

“No, because I knew I’d be driving home. Good thing I had Robin drop me off, or else I’d probably have to go bail you out of holding tomorrow morning.”

Billy grins ear-to-ear and gives a small gasp when a relatively slow song soaks through the walls. He shuts his eyes and takes hold of Steve’s hips, gently guiding him away from the sink.

“God, I wish I could dance with you,” he hums.

Then they’re moving to the rhythm of the song, Billy leading and Steve leaning closer, probably smiling adorably as he steps on Billy’s toes a couple of times.

“What exactly do you call this?”

“This is *bathroom* dancing, it doesn’t count.”

“Oh yeah? And why not?”

Billy tsks and cracks his eyes open to get a peek at Steve's amused expression.

"Because I do it at home all the time."

Steve snorts and Billy presses a kiss to his cheek. This feels an awful lot like a middle school dance, only there are no chaperones telling them to stay three inches apart. No one around to tell them not to kiss one, two, three more times.

"Where do you wanna eat, lover boy?" Steve coos.

"Like, tonight?"

"Mhmm."

"Let's go to Mrs. Wheeler's house, she makes badass lasagna."

They both chuckle and Steve steps on Billy's foot with a raised eyebrow.

"Try again."

"Hmm, how about the diner? Maybe you can sober me up and we can fu—"

Steve kisses him again, deep and slow and hot before pulling away completely, grinning and turning towards the bathroom window.

"Sounds good. Meet me out front."

He proceeds to climb up on top of the toilet and stick a leg out the window, only for Billy to rush to his side and grab his bicep to secure him.

"What're you doing?"

"We can't be seen leaving the bathroom together, dumbass. Besides, I'm stealthy, y'know, like a ninj—"

Then Steve slips out the window and hits the ground with a *thud*. Billy's quick to climb up and look out to make sure he's okay. The

brunet lands gracefully on his ass but manages to scramble up and dust himself off by the time Billy starts cackling.

“ *I’m* the dumbass?”

“Shut up and meet me in the car.”

Steve jogs around the corner of the house and Billy steps off the toilet, shutting the window and giving himself a cursory glance in the mirror to make sure that everything’s in order. There’s happiness stirring in his belly that he hasn’t felt in a long time as he exits the bathroom.

He struts through the kitchen, bypassing the girls who flirted aimlessly with him, thinking only of Steve. It’s only natural that Tommy winds up blocking his path to the front door.

“Funny you kissed Harrington, y’know,” he snickers, patting Billy on the shoulder fondly. “Always kinda thought he was a fag. Looked like he was enjoying himself, probably left to go beat off somewhere.”

He makes the motion of jerking off with his fist and laughs to himself, waiting for Billy to join in, but his expression goes cold when Billy smacks his drink out of his hand. The plastic cup clutters to the ground and sends red liquid splattering all over the tile, pooling beneath Billy’s boots.

“We aren’t chums, Hagan. Touch me again, and we’re gonna have a problem.”

Tommy raises his hands defensively, palms out. He’s still smiling like a jackass even though he takes a careful step back. The music quiets down in the distance and people gather in the doorway slowly. Sniffing out any drama they can find.

And if they can’t watch Billy and Steve go at it like old times, maybe they’ll settle for some new blood.

“Seemed just fine when *he* was touching you. Since when did you cozy up to the fag, Hargrove?”

It’s been forever since Billy’s gotten physical with anyone, or *anything*

, for that matter. Hasn't snapped any of Max's skateboards in half or punched holes in any walls. Any walls that he hasn't *spackled* , anyway. But he has to admit that the sting of his palm as he slaps Tommy Hagan across the face feels good. Better than the feeling of getting six different girls' numbers in a single evening and better than the buzz he's feeling right now. At least ten times over.

Tommy's eyes prick with tears as he cups a hand over his already reddening cheek. Everything is quiet. Still. Kind of peaceful, actually. Then Billy's commencing his route to the front door. He leans close to Tommy's ear as he passes.

"If I catch wind of your big mouth flapping like that again, you can expect to see my car posted up in your driveway," he hisses. Hunching over Tommy like an *animal* . Daring him to do something. To talk back.

When he doesn't, Billy clicks his tongue and slips outside.

The cool night air embraces him as he struts down the steps and approaches the car. Steve is leaning against the driver's-side window. He reaches out and catches the keys when Billy tosses them to him.

"What took you? It's not exactly warm out here," Steve complains.

He clambers in and watches as Billy slides into the seat next to him with a grumble and attempts to fasten his seatbelt.

"Nothin'. Let's go, I'm starved."

Steve starts the car and rests his arm against the center console as he drives down the street. Billy shifts. Stares at his hand. Tenses up when Steve opens his palm and wiggles his fingers.

It's dark out save for the street lights and Billy hesitantly slides his palm against Steve's, watching their fingers fit together seamlessly as though they do the action regularly enough for it to have converted to muscle memory.

Any tension in Billy's shoulders leaves in that instant.

By the time they pull into the parking lot, Steve has been steadily

rubbing the back of Billy's hand with his thumb. They sit there for a moment after Steve kills the engine. As always, this feels unreal. Like any second Billy is going to wake up alone in his bed and none of it will have actually happened.

"Ready to go inside?" Steve coos.

"Mhm."

He lifts their hands and presses a kiss to Billy's knuckles before he opens the door and steps out, leaving the blond sitting there looking after him. They meander inside after Billy hurries to catch up. Standing close but not conspicuously so. He's red all the way down his chest as they slide into a booth. The fist he'd slapped Tommy with clenches and unclenches in his lap. His palm still tingles and he kind of wants to hit something again.

Maybe he'll go find Tommy later and fulfill his promise a little early.

"Have you ever tried crepes?" Steve asks.

"Those skinny pancake things? No."

Steve chuckles and peruses the menu in his hands. Billy already knows what he's gonna get. A burger, fries, and some coffee because he's hoping to get lucky tonight.

"Well, the crepes here are really good. My mom used to bring me here on Friday nights when my dad would be working late. We'd always order breakfast for dinner and pour sugar on the table and eat it with our fingers," he reminisces. "I remember wishing that my dad would work late every night just so we could come here... That's kind of selfish, huh?"

Billy pushes his menu to the edge of the table.

"Nah," he offers softly.

His eyes train on the little basket of sugar packets near the window while Steve folds his menu shut and sets it atop the other, leaning back in his seat and glancing around.

Billy's only ever been in here a couple of times. Always hated the stench of old coffee because it reminds him of Neil. But it isn't so bad now. There's a radio playing softly in the serving window and the only other customer is an elderly woman on the opposite side of the seating area.

"She stopped bringing me when I started high school. Kinda stopped doing stuff with me in general, actually, and I still have no idea why," Steve admits.

There's a beat of silence as Billy leans his elbows against the table.

"Should... Should we have gone somewhere else?" he asks.

Steve looks up at him and raises his eyebrows before he huffs a quiet laugh.

"No, no, I just... I dunno. You're just easy to talk to, I guess. It's hard to keep my trap shut when we're together."

Billy smiles at that.

"I don't mind. I like hearing you talk."

"Really?"

He grabs a packet of sugar and shakes it, not meeting Steve's eyes as he rips it open and pours the contents into his palm. It's a little silly, but he licks his finger and presses it into the little mountain of sugar before sucking it off. Then he holds his palm out to Steve.

The brunet does the same, licks his finger, and dips it in the sugar. Smiling as he touches his finger to his tongue.

"Yeah. I, uh, feel the same way. A-About not being able to shut up when I'm around you."

"Is that so? I feel like I constantly have to pry for info."

Billy chuckles and the waitress appears next to the booth. She picks up the menus and they place their orders, and she's gone again just as fast as she came. Steve is smiling at him when Billy looks again.

“Really? I feel like I’m an open book,” Billy says sarcastically.

“Psh. Tell me something no one else knows about you, then.”

For a moment, Billy just sits there and studies Steve’s face. Takes in every little detail before he dips his finger in the sugar again.

“I’m pretty selfish,” he admits.

Steve snorts.

“I said something I *don’t* know.”

They both chuckle. Billy watches Steve push the sugar around his palm, making shapes in it and tracing circles against his skin. He glances at the woman across the restaurant, still pushing her corned beef hash around her plate, and turns back to Steve with a sigh.

“Well, I used to do stuff with my mom a lot, too,” he begins. Steve’s face gets a little more serious, but he keeps playing with the sugar in Billy’s hand. “I used to hound her to take me to the beach all the time when I was a kid. She’d usually take me on days that she’d fight with Neil just to get away from him.”

“And you wished that they would fight more often so you’d get to go?” Steve finishes gently.

Billy shrugs, watching as Steve brings his other hand up to cup the back of Billy’s.

“One time she said no when I asked her if I could surf because she was busy, but I wanted it so *bad* that I hid my dad’s pack of cigs, knowing they’d argue about it. But, instead of arguing, he uh... He hit her. Back-handed her right across the face. And it was because I wouldn’t take no for an answer.”

The waitress returns with Steve’s orange juice and Billy’s coffee. They pull away from each other quickly, nod when she gives them updates on their food, and Billy doesn’t miss the way Steve’s mouth turns downward.

“Wow, Bill, I... I’m sorry.”

“Don’t be. It was the first selfish thing I did and it definitely wasn’t the last.”

Billy dusts his hands off and Steve retrieves his own packet of sugar. He examines it thoughtfully, expression shifting more towards neutral as he does.

“I think it’s okay, y’know, to be a little selfish sometimes. Like when you decide to snooze your alarm for another five minutes before you get up for work, that type of thing.”

That has Billy smiling again. He shifts in the booth, tapping his boot against Steve’s sneaker and making him spread a little grin as well.

“I hate being selfish,” Billy confesses.

“I didn’t mean—”

“No, I know. I just do things sometimes and I never understand why.”

Steve pockets the packet of sugar and leans forward, his biceps bumping against the table as he fixes Billy with an innocent look. The thing about him is that he always looks innocent until he suddenly doesn’t. Like the flip of a switch, when his brows pinch together and his voice comes out with a touch of harshness like a stressed-out single father of six.

Or when he dawns a sudden wise persona. All soft smiles and calming words that just sound right falling from his tongue. Words that can fix any problem as smooth as cutting through butter with a hot knife.

Billy is certain that no one else in town, not even that Wheeler girl or even the kids have any idea about just how complex Steve Harrington is. How much depth underlies the oceans of hairspray, flashy clothes, and snarky remarks. How he has a weird fascination with pretty rocks from the woods and eating breakfast for dinner.

Billy feels special being privy to that information.

“Like what?”

“Huh?” Billy asks dumbly.

“What selfish things have you done?”

He thinks quietly for a moment, aware of how Steve watches him the entire time, and sips at his orange juice.

“Kissing you earlier, for starters.”

Steve quirks an eyebrow and snickers. He taps his fingers against the underside of the table, his shoe shuffling against Billy’s again.

“How’s that selfish? If I didn’t wanna be kissed, I wouldn’t have kissed back so many times.”

“The first one, during the game.”

“Oh.”

Billy shrugs. As though the past was the past and it’s long forgotten now. Like it didn’t happen half an hour ago.

“What about you, pretty boy, done anything selfish lately?”

He sips from his black coffee. Steve makes a face at him before glancing aimlessly around the restaurant.

“Kieth thinks one of the copies of *Back To The Future* was rented and never returned because we’ve never had the full ten tapes in stock at the store. He keeps a tally of how many days it’s been missing and chalks up the charges, thinking he’s gonna find out which customer has it eventually,” Steve begins with a chuckle. “It was never even rented out. I hid it in the back so I could watch it on my breaks as soon as we got copies of it shipped in.”

Billy snorts and cups a hand over his mouth to hide that coffee shot up his nose. He coughs and plucks a napkin out of the dispenser, tears pricking his eyes as he composes himself, Steve just looking on with an amused expression.

“You watch *Back To The Future* on your break every day?”

“Yes, and I can recite all the lines perfectly and in order, too.”

Just when Billy is about to shout *what the fuck* at the top of his lungs, the waitress returns to their booth with a tray in hand and sets a plate of strawberry crepes in front of Steve. His entire face lights up in milliseconds, and he’s quick to unravel his silverware and plunge his fork into his breakfast like a little kid. Billy pinches his lips into a thin line.

Talk about innocence.

When Billy’s burger is set in front of him, his eyes linger on Steve, and he pops a french fry in his mouth. They eat and Billy feels decently grounded by the time he’s halfway through his meal. The buzz washes away from his mind as he sips his coffee and asks the waitress to leave the pitcher when she returns to refill his mug.

Meanwhile, Steve is absolutely *beaming* . Like eating crepes here on a Friday night without his mom doesn’t upset him in the slightest. Billy distinctly remembers not enjoying going surfing after he started the fight between his parents.

His visits to the beach in general seemed tainted after that.

“You doin’ okay over there?” Steve asks.

“Hmm? Oh, yeah.”

“How’re you feeling?”

That’s the question these days, it seems. Billy glances up at Steve and catches sight of a bit of whipped cream smeared on the corner of his mouth.

“Soberer and a little stupid,” he admits. “A lot stupid, actually.”

“Why’s that?”

Steve wipes the cream away with his thumb and sucks it off before cutting another bite with his fork.

“Should... we take things slower? We don’t really know a whole lot

about each other, and I was grinding on you in a bathroom like an hour ago,” Billy murmurs.

“I like letting things happen organically. That’s how I know stuff about you that I feel like other people don’t get to see, y’know? By just letting shit happen as it happens.”

Billy nods. Then he’s smirking as he tosses another fry in his mouth.

“What do you know about me? I’m curious.”

A sliver of crepe is stuck on the end of Steve’s fork as he waves it around, thinking to himself for a moment before he spreads a soft smile that crinkles his eyes, and bites his lip.

“I know you like romcoms and refilling Ms. Knapton’s bird feeders every other afternoon because she can’t do it herself. You’ve spackled holes in the walls, thinking that I somehow won’t notice when your paint job doesn’t match the rest of the apartment. Rock music isn’t your favorite genre and you go commando in jeans sometimes like a lunatic.”

Billy raises his eyebrows and claps his hands together silently. Part of him wants to laugh, but the other wants to know just how often Steve is paying attention to him. Wondering if he looks as much as Billy does.

“Hm,” is all he says.

Then Steve looks at him expectantly as he takes another bite of his burger.

“What about you, Mr. Keg King, what things have you figured out about me?”

There’s a beat of silence while Billy tops off his coffee and shrugs a shoulder nonchalantly.

“You have a very *tedious* hair care regimen. You’re a top-of-the-line neat freak, to the point where I’ve wondered if you were a maid in your past life, and you talk a lot when you’re relaxed.” Billy smiles to himself and sips his coffee. “Hanging out with those kids in your free

time is your favorite thing in the world. You watch *Back To The Future* religiously, probably obsessively. And you miss your mom even though she lives less than a ten-minute drive away from the apartment.”

Steve chuckles. He nods as he pushes a strawberry around his plate absentmindedly. Probably thinking about how corny it is that Billy pays such acute attention to him. Then he’s biting his lip and locking eyes with the blond.

“Still think we need to take it slow? I think about you all the time when I stock tapes at work.”

“Guess not... Do you stock a lot of tapes?”

“Tons.”

Billy wipes his hands off on his napkin, watches as Steve steals a couple of fries from his plate, and extends his hand across the table. Steve stares at it skeptically before he takes it. A smirk creeps onto his lips when Billy shuffles their shoes together.

“So, you wanna elope now or later?”

Steve snorts and rubs his thumb over Billy’s knuckles.

“Is that supposed to be you asking me out?”

“Maybe.”

Their hands stay linked like a formal handshake frozen in time. Steve is practically vibrating in his seat and Billy can’t help but return his giddy expression.

“Then hurry up and finish your food so we can go make out in your car,” Steve whispers.

Billy’s eyes go wide and he rips his hand away from Steve’s in seconds, picking up his burger and taking a monstrous bite.

“Yes *sir* .”

## **Notes for the Chapter:**

No smut this chapter, sorry.

Steve's gonna make y'all wait just like he makes Billy  
wait xoxo